A Slice of the Good Life: Extra

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/4315905.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/F
Fandom:	Kill la Kill
Relationship:	Jakuzure Nonon/Matoi Ryuuko
Characters:	Jakuzure Nonon, Matoi Ryuuko, Senketsu, Mankanshoku Mako, Original Character
Additional Tags:	A Slice of the Good Life, post-show, daughter - Freeform, Ryunon, Married Couple
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2015-07-11 Words: 837 Chapters: 1/1

A Slice of the Good Life: Extra

by margot16

Summary

One more glimpse into the "A Slice of the Good Life" Universe, several years on from the finale.

Notes

Obviously if you haven't read my other fic "A Slice of the Good Life" you don't have about 99% of the context that would frame this story. Knowing that, thanks and enjoy!

She couldn't remember the last time she cried.

It had been so long that in fact she had forgotten the sensation altogether: the slightly unpleasant ache in the eyes, the warm streams of tears running down and cooling on her cheeks, the knot in the back of her throat. She hated crying, so much so that were she a younger woman she would have suppressed it with rage. But that instinct was long forgotten, and as Ryuko Matoi heard a small voice inquisitively call out from the doorway of the bedroom she remembered why.

"Kaa-san…what's wrong?"

Ryuko turned to the small girl, barely a day over four years old, still surprised by how strikingly similar she looked to her mother. Naturally blonde hair was dyed pink upon her insistence ("I want pretty hair like mama!" she had cried, both of them obliging happily), her skin was porcelain and radiant like Nonon's, but there were two specific features that made her Ryuko's as well. She had Ryuko's eyes, cobalt-grey and strikingly large, able to melt a heart with a single glance. Finally, a streak of red played across her bangs, impervious to both scissors and dye. Modern technology was truly a magical thing, allowing for a miracle like the tiny girl standing looking concerned in front of Ryuko now.

"Oh, uh…hey, Hayami. It's fine I just…I just have something in my eye, dust probably…" Ryuko sniffed, managing a weak smile and wiping the tears from her face as best she could. She was slumped down in front of the closet in the bedroom of their home in Kobe, packing boxes with odds and ends in preparation for a move; onwards and upwards to a bigger house with more room to raise their daughter and nearer to better schools.

"Barely four and we're already putting her through a move…" Nonon had said, unsure.

"She'll be fine. She's ours, right?" Ryuko had reassured with a signature wide, goofy smile.

It was Nonon's turn to save her today.

"Hayami! Be a good girl and finish your chores, okay?" Ryuko heard Nonon call from the kitchen, sweet but firm.

"Okay, mama!" Hayami called, rushing forward and throwing her tiny arms around Ryuko's neck.

"Feel better, kaa-san." She said, Ryuko smiling sadly before kissing her on the forehead and sending her from the room, past Nonon who was now leaning in the doorway, returning Ryuko's sad smile with one of her own. The two of them now alone, Nonon sunk down to sit with Ryuko on the floor, placing her pink-haired head against her shoulder.

"You alright?" Nonon asked carefully. Ryuko's sad smile sustained itself as she directed their attention to a small Polaroid she was holding in her hand, faded but still clearly legible.

"Ah." Nonon said, squeezing Ryuko tighter as she saw the contents of the photograph. Ryuko didn't remember exactly when it was taken, only that Mako had insisted on using the beat-up

old camera to snap a quick shot of Ryuko outside the Mankanshoku home way back when in Honnou town. Ryuko was smiling, youth and vigor evident as always in her features as Senketsu's eye burned on her left breast. The memories flooded back, for the both of them. Meeting Mako, meeting Senketsu, meeting each other. Ryuko couldn't remember the last time she had seen this picture, or why looking at it was so painful all these years on.

"I look so young…" Ryuko muttered, fresh tears rolling down her cheeks.

"We all were. Young and dumb. Kinda hard to believe we saved the damn world way back then, huh?" Nonon said, chuckling breathily.

"That's for damn sure. You know, I counted." Ryuko said, still quiet.

"Counted what?" Nonon asked.

"…years. The years since he-uh, Senketsu…y'know. Passed."

"I'm sorry, Ryuko. I can't even imagine." Nonon cooed, genuine sympathy in her high voice.

"It's been almost sixteen years. Next time we're in Tokyo, we have to visit his grave. I hope Mako's been taking care of it…"

"I'm sure she has." Nonon reassured, rubbing Ryuko's shoulder softly.

"So many memories…it's weird. Most of them are good, but it's almost like I'm sad that they're all over. We've all grown up, moved on, scattered to the wind. Hell, I dunno…" Ryuko trailed off, staring at nothing in particular. Nonon kissed her softly on the cheek, looking thoughtful.

"I dunno either. All I know is, I'm glad you're here, transfer. We made one hell of a kid and I'm sure as shit not raising her alone." Nonon returned, nudging Ryuko in the ribs, making her giggle.

"Yeah, right." Ryuko said, strength returning. They both stood, Ryuko affixing the solitary photograph to the bare wall in front of her with a pin. Nonon looked at her quizzically.

"Maybe this'll make someone else happy so I'm gonna leave it here. I won't need it where we're going." Ryuko said, resolute.

Nonon smiled, eyes twinkling like the day she confessed in front of the piano all those years ago.

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